



# Communicable Disease Report

## Summit County

### August 6, 2019

# Hepatitis A Outbreak Update

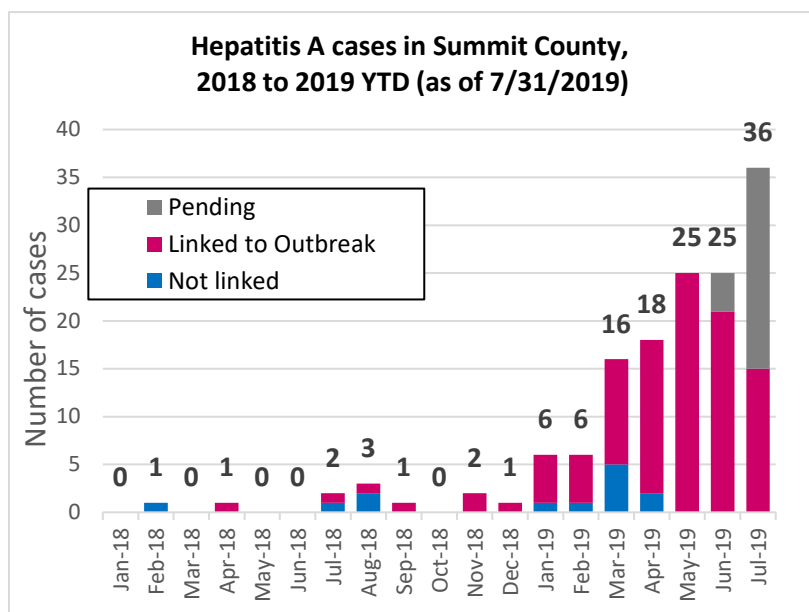


Since 2016, viral hepatitis A community outbreaks have been reported in 29 states nationwide. As of August 2, 2019, these multiple outbreaks have resulted in 23,638 reported cases, 14,079 hospitalizations, and 233 deaths. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) declared a statewide outbreak in early 2018, and so far there have been 3,234 cases, 1,956 hospitalizations, and 15 deaths (as of July 29, 2019).

In this outbreak, hepatitis A is transmitted via contact with objects, food, or drink contaminated with fecal matter from an infected person, or by close person to person contact. People in the following groups have been identified as being at higher risk for becoming infected with hepatitis A, and for having greater complications from the disease:

- People with direct contact with individuals infected with the virus
- Men who have sex with men
- People who use street drugs, whether they are injected or not
- People who are incarcerated
- People experiencing homelessness
- People who have traveled to other areas of the U.S. currently experiencing outbreaks

According to the CDC and ODH, **the most effective way to prevent hepatitis A is by vaccination**, especially for at-risk populations. *Good handwashing practices* will also help prevent transmission of the hepatitis A virus.



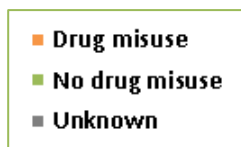
In 2018, hepatitis A outbreak cases were concentrated in southern Ohio, with Butler, Franklin, Montgomery and Hamilton Counties in southwest Ohio reporting the highest number of cases. Summit County reported 11 cases total in 2018, of which 7 were linked to the outbreak. Typically, an average of 7 cases per year are reported Summit County (based on case counts from 2010-2017).

**Since the beginning of 2019, Summit County has experienced an alarming increase in the number of reported hepatitis A cases**, as indicated in Figure 1. There have been additional 132 cases reported in 2019, of which 107 have been linked to the outbreak. Summit County and Ohio outbreak cases are summarized in Table 1.

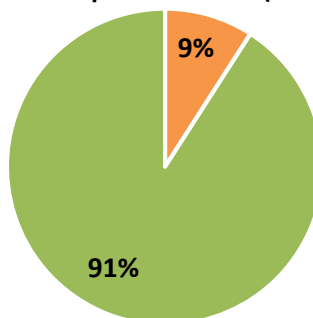
**Table 1. Risk factor statistics for Ohio and Summit County hepatitis A cases**

	Summit County, 1/1/2018 - 7/31/2019		Ohio, 1/5/2018 - 7/29/2019
	Outbreak Cases	All Cases	ODH Outbreak Cases
Case Count	107	143	3234
% Hospitalized	73%	77%	60%
% With hepatitis C	50%	49%	22%
% Reporting drug misuse	74%	78%	53%

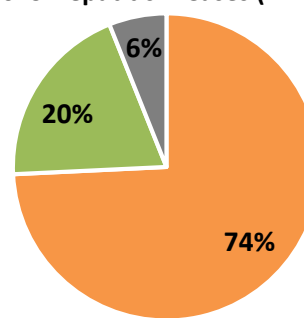
**Figure 2 (to right). Reported drug misuse in Summit County hepatitis A cases, 2018 and 2019 (as of 7/31/2019)**



**2018 Hepatitis A cases (n = 11)**

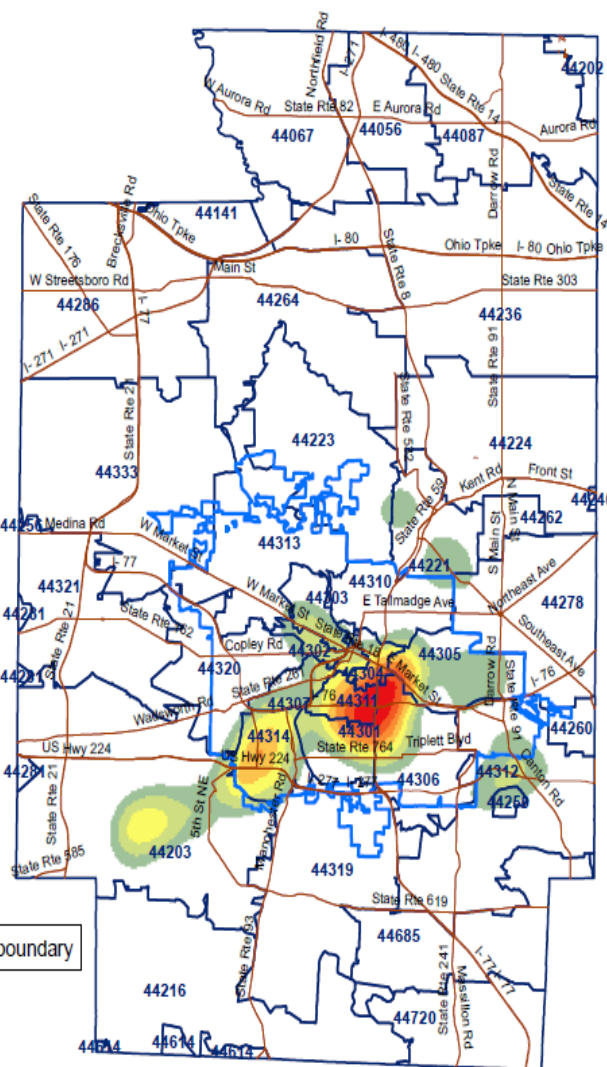


**2019 Hepatitis A Cases (n = 132)**



Drug misuse, especially drugs that are injected, has been reported at higher rates in 2019 hepatitis A cases, suggesting that hepatitis A is circulating among at-risk populations in Summit County (Figure 2). The heat density map in Figure 3 indicates the locations in Summit County that are the most impacted by the outbreak: Akron (University of Akron, Middlebury, South, and Kenmore neighborhoods), Barberton, and Lakemore/Springfield Township.

**Figure 3. Heat density map of hepatitis A cases in Summit County, 1/1/2018-7/31/2019.**



Akron city boundary

Data source: Ohio Disease Reporting System (ODRS)

### ***Prevention efforts in Summit County***

The Communicable Disease Unit at Summit County Public Health has worked with community partners since March, 2018 to provide the hepatitis A vaccine to at-risk populations. As of July 31, 2019, SCPH has administered 554 hepatitis A vaccines through SCPH needle exchange sites, drug rehabilitation programs, community meals, correctional facilities, homeless shelters and other community service agencies. In addition, most Summit County hospitals are administering the hepatitis A vaccine to at-risk emergency department patients.

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#### **For more information:**

Summit County Public Health:

<https://www.scpd.org/news/hepatitis-outbreak>

Ohio Department of Health Hepatitis A Outbreak Website: <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/outbreak-response-bioterrorism-investigation-team/news/newsevent1>

CDC Hepatitis A outbreak information: <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/outbreaks/2017March-HepatitisA.htm>